

What to know and how to prepare before a flood

Terms You Should Know

Flood Watch:

Flooding is possible. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information.

Flash Flood Watch:

Flash flooding is possible. Be prepared to move to higher ground; listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information.

Flood Warning:

Flooding is occurring or will occur soon; if advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

Flash Flood Warning:

A flash flood is occurring; seek higher ground on foot immediately.

What to do before the flood:

Emergency Steps:

1. If flooding is imminent, the number one rule in a flood is to keep yourself safe.
2. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the family contact. After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.
3. Teach all family members how and when to turn off gas, electricity, and water.
4. Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1, police, fire department, and which radio station to tune to for emergency information.
5. Develop an emergency communication plan. In case family members are separated from one another during floods or flash floods. (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school) Have a plan for getting back together.
6. When you gather your insurance papers for safekeeping, also gather any other important papers such as deeds or stock certificates that you may be keeping in the house.
7. Move any valuable items out of your basement. Flood insurance only covers items normally found in a basement, such as a furnace or washer and dryer. Personal items are not covered.
8. Create an emergency kit, with a large flashlight, a battery powered radio, spare batteries, candles, waterproof matches, etc. Even if you never experience a flood, you'll be glad to have this kit in a power outage.

9. If waters rise in your house before you can leave safely, move to the highest level necessary—even the roof. Take extra clothing, your radio, a flashlight and, if possible, food.
10. If you have time, turn off electricity at your breaker or fuse box and close the main gas valve; get valuables (furs, jewelry, important papers) to a higher level; fill bathtubs, sinks and plastic soda bottles with water. (Sanitize tubs and sinks with bleach, rinse and then fill); and bring outdoor possessions (lawn furniture, grills, etc) inside or tie them down securely.
11. Keep away from downed power lines and any other electrical wires—electrocution is always a major cause of death in floods.

Preparing Before the Flood

Hazard mitigation is action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from hazards such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, etc.

Top 3 Things to Do:

1. Avoid building or purchasing a structure in a floodplain unless you elevate and reinforce the structure.
2. Purchase Flood Insurance - Standard homeowners policies do not cover flood damage!
3. Retrofit your Property
 - a. **Elevation** - Raising your house so that the lowest floor is above the flood level.
 - b. **Wet Floodproofing** - Making uninhabited portions of your house resistant to flood damage and allowing water to enter during flooding
 - c. **Relocation** - Moving your house out of the floodplain to higher ground where it will not be exposed to flooding
 - d. **Dry Floodproofing** - Sealing your house to prevent flood waters from entering
 - e. **Levees and Floodwalls** - Building a floodwall or levee around your house to hold back flood water.
 - f. **Demolition** - Tearing down your damaged structure and either rebuilding properly on the same property or buying or building a house elsewhere.

Source:

<http://www.fema.gov>

<http://wyohomelandsecurity.state.wy.us/flood.htm>